

## A welcoming environment for Muslim students

Pat Perriello | Sep. 17, 2012 NCR Today

There is an interesting article in the New York Times education section about Muslim students gravitating toward Catholic colleges.

Reporter Richard Perez-Pena [documents several factors that have added to the total of both male and female Muslim students attending Catholic colleges and universities](#) [1]. Muslim students have found that their peers in these schools are more religious and therefore, more accepting of the religious practices of others. They feel their beliefs are respected. One noted she would rather talk to a Christian than an atheist.

They also assume Catholic schools will be less permissive and thus more in line with their own ethical norms. Even though this assumption is not always borne out in practice, they do appreciate the single-sex floors and single-sex dorms. In general they see the schools as more traditional and conservative.

The colleges themselves have also proved to be accommodating. The University of Dayton, for example, provides prayer rooms for the students and assists them in arranging religious celebrations. It also contracts with a supplier of halal meat for special occasions.

It is good to know that there is a welcoming environment for these students. It is encouraging that there is a place relatively free of anti-Muslim rhetoric and discriminatory behavior.

It is even more important at a time when we are seeing violent uprisings in the Middle East to remember that all Muslims are not our enemies, and that we need to find ways to build bridges to Muslim cultures.

That our Catholic universities and the students there are moving in that direction is surely a good thing.

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**Links:**

[1] [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/03/education/muslims-enroll-at-catholic-colleges-in-growing-numbers.html?\\_r=2](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/03/education/muslims-enroll-at-catholic-colleges-in-growing-numbers.html?_r=2)